

CIA-Oswald tie denied by Colby

By Thomas B. Ross

Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — CIA Director William E. Colby vehemently denied Tuesday that the Central Intelligence Agency had any connection with Lee Harvey Oswald, the officially designated assassin of President John F. Kennedy.

Rep. Carroll Hubbard Jr. (D-Ky.), who led a delegation of 20 freshmen congressmen to an unprecedented breakfast meeting at the CIA, said Colby also refused to comment on allegations of CIA involvement in the assassination of foreign leaders.

But Hubbard said Colby was "most emphatic" in trying to put down renewed speculation about a possible CIA role in Kennedy's death.

The speculation, stirred by reports of illegal domestic activity by the CIA, including links to the underworld, centers on the fact that Oswald served at a Marine base in Japan next to a secret CIA U-2 installation and later lived in the Soviet Union with his wife's uncle, a colonel in the Soviet intelligence.

The Warren Commission, which included the late CIA Director Allen Dulles and President Ford, cited those facts but insisted that Oswald acted alone in assassinating Kennedy.

During the two-hour meeting at the CIA, Hubbard said, Colby acknowledged that the agency had opened a large amount of mail with the acquiescence of Post Office officials for 20 years before the practice was stopped in 1973.

Rep. James Scheuer (D-N.Y.) said Colby defended the CIA's authority to conduct covert operations to support or undermine foreign governments. Scheuer also said he was impressed by Colby's "clear sense of restraint."

Scheuer quoted Colby as insisting that such techniques

would "only be used under a clear, almost dire, showing of overwhelming national interest."

Hubbard said Colby refused to say whether the CIA is conducting operations in Portugal. Sec. of State Henry A. Kissinger and other high-ranking officials reportedly have been grumbling privately that the present furor over the CIA and the fear of leaks have made it impossible to mount an effective clandestine campaign against the ascendant left-wing faction in Portugal.

Rep. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) complained that even though Colby made the first step to arrange the breakfast it turned out to be "something of a public relations effort."

"He left a lot of questions unanswered," Baucus said.

Colby reportedly indicated he could not be more forthcoming because Ford and special Senate and House intelligence committees had taken jurisdiction over certain controversial operations of the CIA.

The President, who received an assassination report from Colby two months ago, told a press conference Monday that he was "personally analyzing" the allegations.

Red leader urges Italy's stay in NATO

RÔME (AP) — Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer opened his party's national congress Tuesday saying Italy should remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to promote detente between the Western and Eastern blocs.

European countries have their identity and they must preserve it, he said, adding that changes in the current status, such as an Italian withdrawal from NATO, would be "not only impracticable, but it would turn out to be harmful for international detente."